

Coordinated Entry for All (CEA) Frequently Asked Questions

CEA Housing Assessment: A standardized assessment tool that helps make decisions on which programs eligible households are referred to based on an understanding of each program's specific requirements, including target population. The Seattle / King County CoC will use population-specific versions of the VI-SPDAT (Vulnerability Index- Service Prioritization and Decision Assistance Tool) with a limited number of additional questions that relate to eligibility for local programs as the CEA Housing Assessment.

How to get an assessment: There are multiple ways to access the housing assessment, such as Regional Access Points and other community-based organizations. Households can access by visiting a site, through street outreach, scheduled appointments, institutions, and special events. A diverse range of staff, known as *Housing Assessors*, are trained to administer the tool; interpretation services are available in staff do not speak the language that the household is most comfortable using. Call 206-328-5796 or, from anywhere in King County, you can call 211 to learn more about eligibility and find a location.

What to do after an assessment: *Housing Navigators* are designated staff from community agencies who assist in navigating the process of preparing for a housing referral to receiving a referral and securing housing. Housing Navigators can support households with gathering required documentation, assisting with transportation needs, and addressing any challenges that may arise in the housing process.

Eligibility

What is the eligibility for CEA?

- ✓ CEA serves all people (single adults, young adults, couples, families, and veterans) experiencing homelessness.
 - Living and sleeping outside
 - Sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation
 - Staying in a shelter
 - Fleeing/attempting to flee domestic violence
 - Staying in transitional housing and were in shelter or a place not meant for human habitation prior to entering transitional housing
 - Exiting an institution where you resided for up to 90 days and were in shelter or a place not meant for human habitation immediately prior to entering that institution

Young adults who are imminently at risk of homelessness within 14 days are also eligible for CEA.

Who is eligible under the domestic violence category?

- ✓ Domestic violence eligibility pertains to an individual or family who is fleeing or is attempting to flee domestic violence, abuse, stalking, dating violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, or other dangerous or life threatening conditions that has taken place within the individual's or family's primary nighttime resident or has made the individual or family afraid to return to their primary nighttime residence.

Are individuals who are incarcerated and who were homeless prior to being incarcerated eligible for CEA?

- ✓ If the individual was homeless prior to being incarcerated, and was incarcerated for 90 days or less, then they are eligible for CEA.
- ✓ If the individual is 18-24 and incarcerated, but were not homeless prior to being incarcerated, or were incarcerated for more than 90 days, they are eligible for CEA two weeks prior to their release because they are losing their current housing.

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	<p>Can sexually exploited young people (youth and young adults of all ages) be seen as domestic violence survivors and receive the same services as DV?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Yes. Additionally, Community Advocates are available to provide case management, resources, and referrals for sexually exploited youth and young adults ages 12-24. They can be reached by calling 855-400-2732 or through email at communityadvocate@youthcare.org <p>Can CEA serve families or single adults (an individual age 25 or older) who don't fit the definition of "literally homeless"?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ No. Eligibility for CEA can only serve households who are literally homeless. There are limited housing resources to meet these needs of people experiencing homelessness. Community resources outside of CEA and that are not designated for serving homeless individuals will continue to serve households not eligible for CEA. <p>Can CEA serve young adults (an individual between 18-24 years old) who don't fit the definition of "literally homeless"?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Yes. Young adults at imminent risk of homelessness (losing housing within 14 days) are eligible for CEA. <p>How will homelessness be proven?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Homelessness will need to be proven when a household is referred to a program. The household will need to provide the documentation required by that program. A housing assessment can be completed with anyone who meets the eligibility described above.
Accessing an Assessment	<p>How can we support people in getting to Regional Access Points (HUBs)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ King County is exploring options for transportation resources dedicated to connecting eligible households with CEA. The primary existing resources are discounted metro bus tickets or Orca Lift.✓ Housing Assessors will also utilize mobile assessment and outreach efforts to connect with people experiencing homelessness who may have other challenges in accessing Regional Access Points. <p>How can we make sure to offer times that work well for those who have jobs or who are in training programs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Assessments will be offered at non-traditional hours through Regional Access Points, and through outreach and community-based assessors. Multiple methods of accessing the assessment, including the various physical locations, will be available. Contact a Regional Access Point or 211 for more information regarding specific needs. <p>Are Regional Access Points family-friendly for young children?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Yes. Regional Access Points are expected to serve all populations, including families with young children. <p>How can we use technology to serve those who have limited mobility or insufficient resources to reach a Regional Access Point?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Multiple methods for administering assessments will be necessary to ensure access to all people experiencing homelessness, including those with limited mobility or other disabilities. CEA will integrate technology, including the use of phone and video conferences such as Google Hangouts to include multiple parties. This approach is also a method that can support the use of Interpreters when needed. <p>Beyond the CEA staff, who will have access to complete a CEA Housing Assessment and make updates?</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ All designated, fully-trained, Housing Assessors will be responsible for completing the CEA Housing Assessment and entering assessment information into HMIS. Housing Assessors will be staff of the Regional Access Points and may also be staff of existing community-based services, such as staff at homeless young adult-serving agencies. ✓ Formal decisions have not yet been made about the extent to which staff outside of Regional Access Points would be designated as Housing Assessors. CEA governance will revisit these conversations during quarterly system evaluation to understand what populations are/are not accessing assessments. <p>How can we help clients not be afraid to be “pushed out” for not being “vulnerable enough”?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A variety of resources are needed to meet the needs of people seeking assistance. This includes flexible resources and light-touch supports as well as very service intensive supportive housing. Ongoing analysis of CEA will allow us to better understand where there are gaps in these resources and how to respond as a system. <p>How can we support the “undocumented population”?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A key principle of coordinated entry is ensuring the ability to house people quickly without screening people out for assistance because of a perceived barrier to housing or services, including undocumented households. ✓ Most programs are able to serve households who are undocumented, however, very few programs are not able to accommodate this and would cause the undocumented household to be ineligible for such a program. <p>Is the process for how veterans access assessments changing?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ No. Veterans will continue to complete the housing assessment with Veteran Navigators and other Assessors, and the VOLT process will continue with veteran-specific housing resources. When the RAPs are open, veterans will have the possibility of more assessment access points, as well as housing options. Once CEA fully launches, veterans could be referred to young adult, family, or single adult housing referrals.
Single Adult Housing	<p>Is there a plan for bringing single adults into CEA and getting assessments completed so they can be considered for housing?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Yes. During the first two months of CEA’s implementation, single adults can access the housing assessment at community-based locations, in addition to the Regional Access Points. Locations will be announced once staff training is complete. The level of need for conducting assessments outside of Regional Access Points will be evaluated for after the first two months of implementation.
Consent	<p>Is the ROI available on-line?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Yes. The ROI is available on the King County HMIS website in English, and a number of additional languages. <p>Who is responsible for uploading the ROI? Does every agency who works with a household need to ask the household to complete an ROI?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The agency who initially entered a household’s information into the database is responsible for uploading the original ROI. The household should only be asked to complete the ROI once, unless it is expiring/

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expired.

Do veterans need to complete a VA ROI?

- ✓ Veterans need to complete a VA ROI in order to be considered for certain housing programs for veterans.

Does every member of a household need to complete the ROI?

- ✓ Yes. Each household member should sign an ROI. Parents or guardians can sign for their children who are under 18 years of age.

If clients refuse HMIS/database consent, how do we find them again when they show up for services or a housing resource becomes available? How does their information get to the referral specialists? What is the timeframe for creating this process?

- ✓ Households that refuse consent will have their identifying information held by CEA outside of the database. Assessments for each household that refuses consent must be sent to CEA for data entry. Assessors should contact a Referral Specialist if they are unsure whether or not a household they are working with has an existing assessment and can update the file, or if a new assessment/profile needs to be completed. CEA Referral Specialists will release identifying information when the head of household consents to a specific referral.

Do providers need to sign the ROI when a client is consenting?

- ✓ **No.** A provider only needs to sign the ROI when a participant is non-consenting.

Which agencies does the ROI cover?

- ✓ The ROI covers all participating CEA agencies and programs.

Where do you send contact information for non-consenting participants?

- ✓ There are two ways to send non-consenting information.
1. Non-consenting participant information should be sent by **Fax to (206) 206-6565, Attn: CEA Referral Specialists**. Print off the profile page from HMIS that has the Head of Household's unique identifier number listed. At the bottom of the page, list all the additional information for each household member. If it is a family, please list all the family members on one page so we know they are connected.
 2. You can also email cea@kingcounty.gov. Send a **secure email** with the subject line "De-Identified Household" listing all the above information for each family member (unique identifier, name, DOB, gender, and contact info).

Assessment Tool

Has an assessment tool been confirmed as our community tool?

- ✓ **Yes.** The VI-SPDAT has been selected as the tool for standardized assessment. CEA will utilize different versions of the VI-SPDAT for families (F-VI-SPDAT), young adults (TAY-VI-SPDAT), and single adults (VI-SPDAT), as well as population-specific additional questions that do not impact vulnerability score, but address eligibility for local programs.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ We are developing a case review process to address for the needs of households who are scored low on their housing assessment, but have high needs or utilization history that demonstrate a need for Permanent Supportive Housing. <p>Will there be a way to include points from additional questions into vulnerability score?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ No. The VI-SPDAT vulnerability scores are set. Additional questions will be included to help us understand what housing programs a household may be eligible for. This will help assure appropriate referrals are made to the specialized programs that exist in our system. <p>How do we ensure there isn't bottleneck of those seeking an assessment?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Access to the CEA Housing Triage Tool is a performance metric to assure that we have an efficient and effective CEA system. The CEA performance metrics will be reviewed on a regular basis as part of the CEA Evaluation Plan. <p>There is a question in the VI-SPDAT that asks "In the last three years, how many times have you been homeless?" What counts as homeless?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ This is a self-reported question and the household can respond how they want. If they seek clarification, you might explain that an experience of homelessness may occur after they have had stable housing, or been housed indoors (not in a shelter or squat), and have become homeless again. <p>What is the Assessor Flag for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ The Assessor Flag should be used when the household has a vulnerability that was not captured in the assessment, either because there is not a question that reflects the vulnerability, or the household did not identify a vulnerability that the assessor is otherwise aware of. For example, if the household is known to have mental health concerns, but does not gain a point for the mental health section or denies that they have mental health issues. <p>What happens when an Assessor selects "yes" for the Assessor Flag?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ A Referral Specialist may follow-up with the Assessor regarding any questions they may have. The assessment will be considered by a Case Review team to determine if the flag is appropriate, and identify next steps for the assessment. The Case Review team will include a minimum of three members, including representatives from King County DSHC, City of Seattle HSD, and at least one provider representative. <p>Is the Case Conference process for veterans continuing?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Yes. The VOLT Case Conference process will continue, as well as the use of the Veterans By Name List to match veterans to permanent housing.
Updating Assessments	<p>How can we make sure a household's information is accurate over time?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ An assessor can update a household's assessment when the household wants to make a update to reflect current eligibility and circumstances. An assessment cannot be updated without the request or consent of the household. An assessor should only complete a new assessment with the household if the household has a new episode of homelessness, or if their situation has changed significantly since their last assessment was completed.

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	<p>I'm concerned that another assessor can update an assessment I completed. Can we prohibit them from doing this?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ No. The assessment is a reflection of the household you are working with. To support a person-centered approach, it is important that any assessor is able to update the assessment to reflect updates to the household and their experiences. <p>What is the Community Queue?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The Community Queue is made up of all housing assessments that are active in CEA. <p>How will the system manage the Community Queue?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The Community Queue will be managed by Referral Specialists at King County. King County is the HMIS System Administrator for CEA. <p>Can we support people who have completed a housing assessment and are waiting for available resources?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Yes. A key component of CEA is to align a variety of resources for eligible households. Some of these resources include Diversion and flexible financial assistance, access to education and employment services, and assistance with accessing benefits and other resources outside of homeless housing assistance. Additionally, Housing Navigators will be able to help if a household needs assistance obtaining identification, etc. <p>How can we ensure seamless connection for clients who age out of youth programs (24 ½) and who are transitioning into adult services?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ One of the benefits of CEA is an increased access to housing options for populations traditionally limited to population-specific resources, yet remain eligible for other resources. One example of this are young adults who are eligible for single adult resources. The use of the VI-SPDAT system-wide will assist with this connection, as will the use of a common database through HMIS.
Community Queue	<p>Are all assessments referred to the queue? Is there a circumstance where they would not be referred to the queue?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A housing assessment must be referred to the Community Queue in order for the household to be considered for housing based on the housing assessment. If the household has more than one assessment for some reason (per policy, in the event that the household is experiencing a new episode of homelessness), the most updated housing assessment should be referred to the Community Queue. An assessor may need to contact Bitfocus for support to remove an assessment from the Community Queue.
Rapid Rehousing (RRH)	<p>How can we make sure rapid rehousing is <i>rapid</i>?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Housing locator functionality is key in successful housing placement for families and individuals in rapid rehousing programs. We are exploring the options for integrating existing housing locator services and expanding the reach of these services to address the needs in the current housing market through the re-envisioning of the Landlord Liaison Project taking place in February and March. <p>How will rapid rehousing fit into the future vision of CEA?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Rapid rehousing is one type of permanent housing intervention that will receive referrals from CEA.

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Emergency Shelter	<p>Will family shelter referral policies change with CEA?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ No. Access to emergency shelter will not change with the implementation of CEA. Family Shelter will continue received referrals through coordinated entry and other shelter resources will be accessed outside of CEA. With the implementation of CEA, access to shelter can be analyzed to determine gaps in resources and opportunities for improvement. <p>Will the way young adults and single adults access shelter change with CEA?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ No. Young adults and single adults will continue to access shelter outside of CEA; young adults and single adults do not need a referral from CEA in order to access shelter.
Diversion	<p>How can we make sure households are being referred to resources <i>before</i> they enter the homeless system?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Diversion services are currently part of coordinated entry systems (YHC and FHC) and will continue and expand as we transition to CEA.
Prevention	<p>How does Best Starts for Kids relate to CEA?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Best Starts for Kids is in the process of developing a Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention Plan. This plan will be submitted to County Council and outline our funding strategy to stop youth and young adults and families with children from becoming homeless To learn more about the Best Starts for Kids Levy you can go to the DCHS website: http://www.kingcounty.gov/elected/executive/constantine/initiatives/best-starts-for-kids.aspx
Learning from other Systems	<p>What can we learn from the Affordable Care Act regarding access to assessments?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The process for determining where community based assessments will take place is currently underway and is using models like the ACA In-Person Assistors. We will evaluate the success and areas for growth through implementation of CEA.
Cultural Sensitivity	<p>How can we ensure CEA staff are competent in providing culturally tailored and sensitive services?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Staff at Regional Access Points will be able to provide services on-site in multiple languages, as well as have access to interpreters on the phone. Referral Specialists also speak a number of languages, and can access interpretation services as needed. Additionally, partnerships between Regional Access Points and community-based organizations will help agencies reach out to and serve specific cultural groups.
Regional Access Points	<p>What other services/resources will be available at Regional Access Points?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ This is still being determined, but one of the intentions of the Regional Access Points is to provide a variety of services for households experiencing a housing crisis. <p>How can we make sure school aged children are supported?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Regional Access Points need to be family-friendly environments that are able to accommodate households with children. Housing Navigators at Regional Access Points may also be available to help connect children with school, transportation, and other supportive services. <p>How can we better leverage mainstream resources?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Strengthening collaboration with mainstream resources will be an on-going process. This will be a key piece of work as our community gets Regional Access Points in place, and has already started with the

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	<p>fundors of employment services for homeless job seekers and the WorkForce Development Council.</p> <p>Is there a way for DSHS and TANF staff to be available at Regional Access Points?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Strengthening collaboration with mainstream resources will be an on-going process. This will be a key piece of work as our community gets Regional Access Points in place. <p>Can the 16 WorkSource sites have staff trained in CEA to provide assessments?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The process for determining where community based assessments will take place is currently underway and is taking into account the locations where people experiencing homelessness are already accessing services. <p>Can Regional Access Points provide drug/alcohol treatment?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A MIDD II Briefing Paper has been submitted; this request aims to ensure that behavioral health resources are part of Regional Access Points. Each Regional Access Point may be connected with local resources; ask when you visit about other services they may be able to refer to.
Housing Providers	<p>How can I post an opening that CEA needs to fill?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Beginning June 27, 2016, send an email to cea@kingcounty.gov using the form titled "Notification of Available Resource." Housing Providers should email cea@kingcounty.gov if you need this file sent. It is anticipated that in July 2016, open units will be able to be posted in HMIS (Clarity). <p>How can I communicate about the status of pending referrals?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Referrals should be updated in HMIS. If a referral is denied, the reason the household is ineligible must be included. <p>How can I receive database access?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Contact the Site Lead at your agency. Training information for access to HMIS is available on Bitfocus' local website: http://kingcounty.hmis.cc/ (required for Housing Assessors and Housing Providers).
Housing Referrals	<p>What is the process when people do not have a phone?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Housing Referrals from CEA rely on having a way to contact a household. Since not every household has a phone, and phones can be lost and numbers can change, we must be creative about the ways CEA can reach households. An assessor should ask the household if there are people (friends, family, a case manager, etc.) who can get a message to them, or a place they go to where they'd be able to receive a message (meal program, drop-in, shelter, etc.). Outreach teams are often integral to being able to reach someone who is staying outside. CEA can use phone, text, email, and Facebook in their attempts to reach a household for a referral. <p>Can households expect a call from CEA about housing before they are next eligible for a housing resource?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ No. The list of households seeking housing changes every day with new intakes and households' situations changing. Housing Navigators will work with households to help prepare them as much as possible so they are ready (identification, documentation, etc.) if they are called for

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a resource.

Can a household refuse a resource?

- ✓ **Yes.** There is no limit to the number of resources a household can refuse, and their score will only change if their situation has changed. However, the household may continue to be contacted when a resource they are eligible for is available; if they refuse the resource, the Referral Specialist will seek to understand why they are refusing the resource and ensure that the household is eligible for other resources that they may be more interested in. If the household is not interested in resources available through CEA they may ask to be inactive.

Prioritization

- ✓ Households with an active mobility request are prioritized for an available opening. The goal is to keep a household housed.
- ✓ If there are no households who are on the mobility list who are eligible or interested in the available unit, households who are eligible and have the highest score on their housing assessment will be the next eligible. When there are two or more households eligible and they have the same vulnerability score, tiebreakers, as identified in the CEA Operations Manual, will be used to determine who will be called first.

How can we build empowerment and client choice into CEA?

- ✓ A key component of CEA is a shift from a unit-centered to a person-centered referral process. Rather than starting with an open unit and sorting through the community queue for a person to fit that unit, the referral process will begin with the person and provide an opportunity to select from the housing resources that have openings at that time. This presents an opportunity for the household to choose the program they would like a referral to (perhaps this will be based on location or unique services available at that program, etc.). By not limiting housing options because of a preference given by the household at the time of assessment, the household will be able to be contacted for any resource they are eligible for, with the opportunity to make a decision at the time of that call as to whether or not they want to accept the referral.

How will we ensure that CEA does not limit the ability of local service providers to respond to the needs of their immediate homeless neighbors?

- ✓ CEA will need ongoing attention to regional and neighborhood impacts along the way; however, CEA is intended to improve this type of community response rather than limit it. A primary focus of the planning for CEA is to ensure equitable access to homeless housing and resources throughout King County. Right now, there are many disparities in what response is available in different neighborhoods. CEA provides a more transparent method for prioritizing resources for those who have the greatest needs, as well as an ability to increase flexible supports offered at the "front door" of the system to respond to immediate needs.

How can we connect agencies with unique resources to support high needs clients?

- ✓ Increased collaboration with behavioral health and efforts to identify new resources to expand behavioral health supports are underway, including MIDD Renewal and SAMHSA Grants. Currently, the following resources have been identified to support agencies in connecting people with additional supports:
 - ✓ BHRD Housing (including YA, single adults, and Veterans)

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ -Contact a Referral Specialist to learn more about eligibility ✓ CORES training ✓ NARCAN Training ✓ Summit on Homeless Families and Health – June 30th <p>Can King County Behavioral Health & Recovery Division provide staff so their population might use the CEA for referrals to their programs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The King County BHRD team is working closely with the CEA planning team to identify opportunities for collaboration contributing to the development of a comprehensive behavioral health strategy for the homeless housing system. <p>If a client gets into housing and it's not working out, how will this be managed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A Mobility Request can be made to help address this. Mobility is the process for household already in housing to be prioritized for transfer to another homeless housing program if they experience a change in household composition, geographic change, change in service need, safety issue, or are aging out of their current program with no other housing options. <p>How can we consider disproportionality when allocating resources?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A key principle of coordinated entry is ensuring the ability to house people quickly without screening people out for assistance because of a perceived barrier to housing or services. People of color are disproportionately impacted by high screening criteria, such as evictions and criminal history. Lowering screening criteria and reducing program barriers for participating programs will help to address disproportionality in homeless services. ✓ Additional conversations and strategies are necessary to help ensure equitable referral of resources. Governing structures will continue to identify next steps to help support populations that disproportionately experience homelessness.
Evaluation	<p>How can we make sure we are listening to those accessing services to make sure CEA works?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The All Home Consumer Advisory Council is providing input in the planning and design for CEA and hosted a consumer focus group to contribute to the design. Similar forums will be incorporated throughout implementation and in future governance of CEA. Themes heard in the January focus group included the need for clarity and transparency about how services can be accessed and by whom, a clear message of where to go to get those services, reduced barriers to housing and resources, and flexible resources to connect with housing if a financial burden is the only limitation to accessing housing.
Grievances	<p>How can I file a grievance?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Client concerns and grievances should be resolved promptly and fairly, in the most informal and appropriate manner. A grievance should be filed with the appropriate body, depending on the nature of the grievance. For example, a grievance can be filed with the housing program if the household was in or interacted with a housing program, the Tenants Union if the grievance is regarding screening practices or discrimination, and with CEA if the grievance is about CEA policies and procedures. Details, including contact information and required components of a grievance, are available on the CEA website.

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